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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001701

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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/LEBANON: DUTCH MFA SKEPTICAL OF EU
BORDER MISSION IDEA

REF: SECSTATE 128335

Classified By: Counselor for Political Affairs Andrew Schofer for
reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On September 17, 2007, POLOFF delivered
reftel points Syria/Lebanon Desk Officer Peter van der
Bloemen. Staff in the MFA Departments of Middle East and
Security Affairs do not support the Lebanon border monitoring
mission at this time, without a clear exit strategy and
without guarantees of Syrian support. The EU is divided on
the mission. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Van der Bloemen indicated first that the MFA was
skeptical of the monitoring mission for practical reasons.
The Dutch are waiting to hear more about the mission's
mandate, time frame and purpose. The Dutch have seen other
monitoring missions endure in the absence of a clear exit
strategy. Adding a training element to the mission, so that
the benefits continue beyond the conclusion of the mission,
might help. Other useful elements for a monitoring mission
plan might include reactivating the border committee,
demarcating the border and resolving Shebaa farms.

¶3. (C) Van der Bloemen was most concerned that a border
monitoring mission might shift blame from Syria to the EU for
controlling the border. The EU would need to make clear
statements to Syria on expectations. The Netherlands' top
priority is disarming Hezbollah.

¶4. (C) The September 18 presentation in Brussels by EU
Special Representative Otte may resolve some Dutch concerns.
The MFA will confer after the presentation to present the
issue to FM Verhagen.

¶5. (C) Van der Bloemen said the EU was divided about evenly
on the border monitoring mission. Some southern countries
support it; about thirteen states think it's "worth a try."
Arnall